

Historic Hotels!

I: The *Los Angeles Ambassador*

The site on which the historic *Ambassador* presently stands was a part of a dairy farm until the year 1902. A 23 acre section which now comprises the Ambassador property was sold in that year. The property changed hands a few times and in 1919 construction of the *Ambassador* began in June on the estimated \$5 million hotel, designed by Myron Hunt. At that time, \$5 million was an inconceivable amount of money to spend on such a project. The original idea was conceived by the Los Angeles and Wilshire area Chambers of Commerce as a civic endeavor. In 1919, the Wilshire area was considered to be too far from the center of things to have much value. It was believed that Los Angeles would develop in an eastward movement, instead of towards the sea, as did happen. The placement of the Ambassador was the major impetus behind the development of Wilshire Boulevard into one of L.A.'s main arteries. The hotel was originally called "The California", however its name was changed to the *Ambassador*, when it became a part of the Ambassador Hotels chain, which included The Alexandria in Los Angeles.

There are currently 444 rooms for guests in addition to 60 rooms for servants, and the total number is in the area of 600 which includes 76 in bungalows. Future additions to the hotel, which have been planned and will be built as rapidly as necessary, call for an additional 600 rooms, making the entire capacity of the completed plant about 1200 rooms. There are 13 acres of actual floor space, two of which are covered by hand-made tile; 25,000 square feet of plate glass windows; 2,100 doors; 30 miles of plumbing pipes in the main building alone and 60 miles of telephone conduit; 400 bath tubs in bathrooms that are all tiled. Even the bathrooms have outside exposure. An unusual feature is that the closets in the rooms are not less than 5 X 6 feet in dimension, and in many rooms they range 7 X 10 feet!

Flower boxes are one of the features of both interior and exterior of the building, such as are enjoyed in European countries, and more than a mile of these concrete containers were constructed right on the grounds.

